

Serial No. 10/020,869
60130-1294: 00MRA0564

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4, 5, 17 and 20-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Queveau in view of WO Patent No. 01/14665 to Larabel. The Examiner states that Queveau does not disclose an O-shaped seal between a manually actuatable element and an opening in which the manually actuatable element is moved. The Examiner states that Larabel teaches an o-shaped seal, and it would be obvious to provide the elastic seal ring of Larabel in Queveau since an elastic seal ring protects the interior space from the entry of air, water and other contaminants. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

The claimed invention is not obvious. Queveau does not disclose that the entire trim strip 4 provides a waterproof barrier between a wet space and a dry space as claimed. Queveau discloses an exterior panel 1 including a window glass 5 that can be raised or lowered. It is not possible to provide a complete watertight seal between the window 5 and the exterior panel 1, and therefore water will flow into a door cavity 21. A support panel 3 acts as a waterproof barrier in the door. However, the support panel 3 is not a trim panel. The trim strip 4 is located on the dry side of the waterproof barrier provided by the support panel 3. The trim strip 4 only performs aesthetic functions.

The trim strip 4 does not need to define a waterproof barrier because the support panel 3 provides this function. In fact, the trim strip 4 is not waterproof because of the existence of a hole 44 that allows a cladding sheet of the support panel 3 to be exposed. The trim strip 4 also includes several openings which receive grills 61 and 93, as further shown in the Figure. The grill 93 is for a loud speaker and is clipped on the support panel 3 (page 5, paragraph 1 of the translation), and the grill 61 is for an air duct 6 (page 4, paragraph 2 of the translation). Grills 61 and 93, by definition, include openings that would allow water to flow through the grills 61 and 93. The hole 44 and the grills 61 and 93 would not allow the entire trim strip 4 to provide a waterproof barrier as claimed.

Additionally, claim 1 recites a sealing arrangement that seals a manually actuatable element relative to a trim panel. Because the trim strip 4 of Queveau does not act as a waterproof barrier as claimed, there is no reason to seal any component relative to the trim strip 4.

Finally, the claimed seal arrangement seals a manually actuatable element relative to a trim panel to prevent moisture from passing to a vehicle interior side of the trim panel. Even if a

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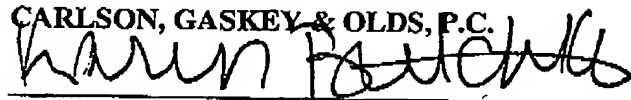
component was sealed to the trim strip 4 of Queveau, the seal arrangement would not prevent moisture from passing to the vehicle interior side of the trim strip 4 because there would be no moisture present. That is, the support panel 3 blocks the passage of moisture already, so there would be no moisture for the seal arrangement to block.

Larabel also does not disclose any waterproof panel. Therefore, the combination of the references together does not disclose, suggest or teach the claimed invention. The claimed invention is not obvious, and Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 2, 4-18 and 20-24 are in condition for allowance. No additional fees are seen to be required. If any additional fees are due, however, the Commissioner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 50-1482, in the name of Carlson, Gaskey & Olds, P.C., for any additional fees or credit the account for any overpayment. Therefore, favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

CARLSON, GASKEY & OLDS, P.C.

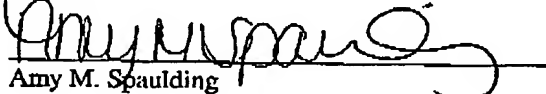


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CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to the United States Patent and Trademark Office, 571-273-8300 on March 23, 2006.



Amy M. Spaulding